

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—James Freeman Clarke.

VOL. III.

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THE GOLDEN SUNSET.

The golden sea its mirror spreads
Beneath the golden skies,
And but a narrow strip between
Of land and shadow lies.

The cloud-like rocks, the rock-like clouds,
Dissolved in glory, float,
And midway of the radiant flood
Hangs silently the boat.

The sea is but another sky,
The sky a sea as well;
And which is earth and which the heavens,
The eye can scarcely tell.

So when from us life's evening hour
Soft passing shall descend,
May glory born of earth and sky
The earth and heavens blend,

Flooded with peace the spirit float,
With silent rapture glow,
Till where earth ends and heaven begins
The soul shall scarcely know.

—Samuel Longfellow.

PRAYER.

Let us pause here for a moment to contemplate the immense, the unspeakable importance and value of this wondrous gift wherewith the love and condescension of the Almighty have endowed us. It is hard

enough to conceive that there is such a thing actually as a direct instrument of intercourse between the soul of a creature creeping out his poor, weak, sinful life upon this dust-spot of a world and Him, the unnamable, uncomprehended spirit, whose Being fills the heaven of heavens. Men admit, perhaps, theoretically, the objective validity of prayer,—that God does actually hear and answer it; but they stop short, commonly, in practice, at the consideration of its subjective utility. The first is too great and wonderful a thought to be often realized. They pray under its impression sometimes. No man really prays at all except in the faith that there is something more in prayer than a self-acting, spiritual exercise. But few of us can keep clearly in mind at other hours the stupendous fact that we possess a means of direct, personal access to God, through which it is at our own choice to ask and obtain from him the very highest gifts for which our souls can crave. When we do believe this, practically and continuously, a new life for a man must begin. It must always, however, I suppose, remain a source of wonder that such things should be true. The very extent of the power of prayer, the sudden flood of light and life which it opens sometimes to the soul, is so vast a matter that a fresh sort of scepticism springs up in contemplating it. I do not doubt that many of the errors current among Christians concerning "Election" and "Predestination to Life" have their source in the natural incredulity of the religious man's mind at the immense results arising from an act apparently so poor and weak as his own prayer. Like a child which has held a powerful burning-glass in its feeble hand, and is amazed at the fire which ensues, he exclaims: "I have not done it. I could not do it. My act could never have brought from heaven the flame which has changed my whole nature. God must have done it all, independently of

my wretched prayer; and the difference between me and those who have not felt this fire of heaven must be all his 'election' and 'predestination.'

But these things are not so. God has made prayer the "means" of an immeasurable "grace"; and he has laid open those means to every one of his children. Sooner or later we shall all pray, pray with spirit, strength, and "find what comes" of such prayer.

That any act of religious aspirations should be efficacious or acceptable, it appears that only two things are necessary,—*not* unhesitating and entire faith, for that is one of the gifts which prayer must bring rather than take; *not* by any means a belief "keeping whole and undefiled" a series of intellectual propositions, for there is but one which concerns prayer at all,—namely, that there is a God who may hear us; *not* absolute virtue, for it is to help us to this that prayer is chiefly given,—but these two things, sincere earnestness and a will struggling to obey in all things the will and law of God.

Prayer which is not really earnest, as earnest as our poor hearts and wandering thoughts and imperfect consciousness can make it, is not prayer at all. It is talking to the winds, not to God. The arrow which is to shoot into heaven must fly from the bow strained to its very utmost tension. After all, if we understand rightly what we are to ask of God, there is not very much to be said at any one given hour of prayer; and the case is not merely that one single fervent ejaculation is worth *as much* as pages mumbled over in drowsy half-attention, but that *it* only is *prayer*, and the rest is all heathenism and solemn mockery. People do not mean it so, and, doubtless God forgives the sins of our stupidity no less than our unavoidable ignorance; but, in reality, nothing can well be conceived more truly irreligious than the common habit of mumbling over the most solemn invocations to the Almighty, asking him to listen to our supplications for the most stupendous of gifts, while the whole time we afford the subject precisely that fraction of our mental, moral, and affectional powers which ordinarily suffices to sing a lullaby to a child! We are all agreed on this point. Even preachers who have just read out

prayers so prolix that scarcely the spiritual wing of a seraph could follow them in one continuous soar are ready enough to lash the languid life of our devotions. But, if the inattention be not quite so gross as that I have described, still the whole system of prayer which I believe to be usually followed, almost necessitates a minor degree of it. Such a multitude of requests are to be proffered consecutively, prayers for all sorts of blessings on everybody are so mixed up with much praise and little thanksgiving, all to be uttered at the one hour of worship, that it is quite impossible that the human mind in its present constitution can grasp them all. How much the partial inattention thus rendered unavoidable leads to habitual drowsiness and carelessness, no one can doubt. It were greatly to be wished that it could be impressed on us all that, as prayer is the act of most majestic dignity attached to our manhood, so it is the most vigorous exercise of which our souls are capable. Not till the soul acts with all its strength, strains its every faculty, does prayer begin. To lay out, then, schemes for a cultus, private or public, wherein the natural difficulty of such high exercise is doubled by varying and repeated demands, is obviously absurd. We are wearied out by being marched round and round the temple, and are actually discouraged from ascending the steep steps, and pressing through the portal.

It will be said, "If nothing *less* than this vehement action of the soul be really prayer, then we cannot pray so often as we desire." I answer, unhesitatingly, Nothing *less* deserves to be called by the *same name* as that most awful passage of mortal experience; but it does not follow that nothing else is *worship*.

By and by I shall speak of that indirect worship, wherein it is to be hoped all life at last may merge for us, wherein not only we shall know that *laborare est orare*, but all feeling shall be holy feeling, all thought shall be pure, loving, resigned, adoring thought, so that at every moment of existence we shall "glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God's." But, even as regards direct worship, it is to be believed that, when we are *really* incapable of true prayer, God is not without a blessing in his hand (though, of course, a lesser one

than that highest communion); for the soul would fain offer such sacrifices as it possesses. It is often impossible, from physical weariness or pain, or mental anxiety and grief, to feel much spiritual hunger and thirst at hours when yet a prudent regard for the sustenance of our better life has made us resolve that we will always seek to strengthen our souls with God's bread of life. If we cannot at such times raise our spirits in that strong upward flight which constitutes true prayer, it may suffice that we lift our eyes to our Father in that longing or trusting gaze which may yet be worship.

How beautifully this worship of repose is described in Coleridge's "Pains of Sleep"!—

"Ere on my bed my limbs I lay
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees;
But, silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to love compose,
In humble trust mine eyelids close,
With reverential resignation;
No wish conceived, no thought expressed,
Only a sense of supplication,—
A sense o'er all my soul impressed,
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, everywhere,
Eternal strength and wisdom are."

—F. P. Cobbe.

THE STILL HOUR.

WATCHING.

In childhood's season fair,
On many a balmy, moonless summer night
While wheeled the light-house arms of dark and
bright

Far through the humid air,

How patient have I been,
Sitting alone, a happy little maid,
Waiting to see, careless and unafraid,
My father's boat come in.

I had no fears,—not one;
The wild, wide waste of water leagues around
Washed ceaselessly; there was no human sound,
And I was all alone.

But Nature was so kind!
Like a dear friend, I loved the loneliness;
My heart rose glad as at some sweet caress
When passed the wandering wind.

Yet it was joy to hear
From out the darkness sounds grow clear at last,
Of rattling row-lock and of creaking mast,
And voices drawing near.

"Is't thou, dear father? Say."

What well-known shout resounded in reply,
As loomed the tall sail, smitten suddenly
With the great light-house ray!

I will be patient now,
Dear heavenly Father, waiting here for thee:
I know the darkness holds thee. Shall I be
Afraid, when it is thou?

On thy eternal shore,
In pauses, when life's tide is at its prime,
I hear the everlasting rote of Time
Beating forevermore.

Shall I not, then, rejoice?
Oh, never, lost or sad, should child of thine
Sit waiting, fearing lest there come no sign,
No whisper of thy voice.

—Celia Thaxter.

The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lonely pine on the mountain top waves its sombre boughs, and cries, "Thou art my sun." And the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue, and whispers with its perfumed breath, "Thou art my sun." And the grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind, and makes answer, "Thou art my sun."

So God sits, effulgent, in heaven, not for a favored few, but for the universe of life, and there is no creature so poor or so low that he may not look up with childlike confidence, and say, "My Father! thou art mine."

O impatient ones! Did the leaves say nothing to you as they murmured, when you came hither to-day? They were not created this spring, but months before; and the summer now here will fashion others for another year. At the bottom of every leaf stem is a cradle, and in it is an infant germ; and the winds will rock it, and the birds will sing to it all summer long, and next season it will unfold. So God is working for you, and carrying forward to the perfect development all the processes of your lives.—*Life Thoughts*.

We have a friend who knows us better than we know ourselves, loves us better than we love ourselves, helps us when we cannot help ourselves, forgives us when we cannot forgive ourselves, and when we despair breathes into our hearts a new and divine hope.—J. F. C.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

LIFE IN CAPERNAUM.

(Continued.)

[We cannot deny ourselves here the pleasure of quoting the following passage, from Furness's interesting little book, "The Power of Spirit."]

What the narrative proceeds to tell us may well command the most thoughtful attention. It relates that the next morning, "*a great while before day*," Jesus left his bed, and "*went out and departed to a solitary place, and there prayed*," and that, when his friends went in search of him, and found him and told him that everybody was inquiring for him, he refused to return to Capernaum, declaring that he must go to other places and preach the kingdom, for that it was for which he had come forth in public.

Are we not authorized to infer from this passage that the startling effects of his first appearance as a teacher—the incident in the synagogue and the consequent excitement—took Jesus himself by surprise? Having a purely moral aim only, an unlooked for physical effect had been produced, in consequence of which every one was regarding him as a powerful exorcist, one of a class or profession common at that day. This was not what he meant at all. And consequently he stole silently away the next morning, before it was light, to a solitary place, to pray and to meditate upon the unexpected turn which things had taken.

Who is not struck by the wonderful greatness of mind manifested by this Jewish youth, in that he thus instantly turned his back upon the wild popular enthusiasm in his favor, which had kindled the whole city into a flame? Not then, nor ever afterwards, did he lay claim to the possession of any preternatural gift, or show the least consciousness of possessing such a gift. Occasions for these remarkable effects were never of his seeking. He rather avoided them. Never did he take the least credit to himself on their account.

But one thing, as is evident from his manner of speaking of it, made a profound impression upon him,—came to him, I believe, like a revelation from heaven. And that was the astonishing power of the faith

which the people manifested in him,—a faith which was indeed produced by him, but without design on his part, unconsciously,—a faith inspired by the native, original force of his character, and that wrought upon the people not only, nor mainly, by what he said, but by his whole air and manner, and all the more powerfully because it was an influence unconscious and indefinable. No, it was no peculiar gift of his own that he ever magnified or ever thought of. "Not in the skirts of my garments," he virtually said, "resides any medical virtue: it is your faith that heals you." The power of the faith of the people,—that it was at which he marvelled. Witnessing that, seeing that it needed only a word from his lips, a touch of his hand, and not always even so much as these, to produce these extraordinary effects, is it any wonder, do we not clearly perceive why it was, that he used the boldest figures of speech when he spoke of faith, declaring that, if one had faith only as a grain of mustard-seed, he could uproot trees and overturn mountains?

I cannot but regard it as a necessary consequence of his observation of the remarkable effects of faith—in other words, of "the power of Spirit"—upon persons nervously diseased that his own faith, great as it originally was, should receive new and extraordinary power. Who ever lived to learn like him? Did he not learn obedience by the things that he suffered? And was he not made perfect by suffering? A sparrow could not fall to the ground without revealing to him the eternal providence. Open, then, as I believe his mind must have been to the lessons of nature and of life, the faith in his own personal power as well as the faith of all around him, and far more than theirs even, must have been quickened into powerful and ever-growing energy. The unfathomable deeps of his own great nature were stirred to the inmost.

When we fully appreciate this fact,—namely, that his extraordinary experience must have wrought to increase greatly his sense of power, to deepen beyond measure that consciousness of himself,—we are in a measure prepared for the still more wonderful manifestations of the power of spirit related in his history. At the first it was only individuals nervously diseased who

were suddenly restored to health through his influence. But subsequently there are far more extraordinary cases reported, such, for example, as the instantaneous healing of leprosy, of lameness, of blindness, and, most wonderful of all, the restoration of the recently dead to life, and finally, as the greatest, the crowning event, the reappearance alive of Jesus himself after his crucifixion,—facts in which, blindfolded as we are by the dense materialism of our times, we are unable to discern the mighty operation of spiritual power.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

WHAT SHALL WE PLAY TO-DAY?

Eleventh Paper.

Froebel's nineteenth gift is known as "peas-work." Materials, bits of wire the size of a hair-pin, of various lengths, pointed at the ends, and peas soaked in water for twelve hours, and dried one hour previous to using. The child's old friend, the cube, may be represented in skeleton by this material, and from it all the forms of crystallization evolved; but the little people will probably be more interested in constructing benches, chairs, a drum, or picture-frames. It would be well to *lead* them to make the letters of the alphabet and numbers.

Other material may be substituted, particularly for the peas,—for instance, bread made into little balls, putty, wax, or bits of cork. The most artistic work of this order ever seen by me was of dried cedar twigs, held together by common pins, the shining heads of which were highly ornamented.

A moment's thought will show the intimate connection between this gift and the twentieth and last,—namely, "modelling,"—as the skeleton objects are excellent "models," presenting the *forms* clearly to the eye.

The materials necessary for work with Froebel's last gift are, a board about seven by nine inches, a tiny wooden modelling knife, and potter's clay. But, as this occupation is only a refinement of the good old-fashioned childish amusement of "making mud pies," modelling may be carried on in

the nursery without much ceremony. The first form is naturally the sphere: a few pats of the baby fingers will make it a cube, and rolling it will make it a cylinder. The childish fancy soon seeks to represent other objects,—a cherry, bunch of grapes, nest with eggs in it, bag of flour, plates, dishes, rake, and various other tools; while the more ambitious children will attempt more elaborate work.

Other material may be substituted for the clay, as soaked bread, putty, or wax. This last may be tucked away in the pocket, and used to while away stray moments which might otherwise hang heavily for the little ones.

If the modelling is to be anything more than a mere amusement, the children must be guided, and permitted to experiment. I would suggest that they be shown the interchangeability of the geometric forms,—for instance, how the sphere may be formed into a cube, and how the cube loses its corners in the sphere, and passing thence to the many-sided forms. While gaining this systematic knowledge, let them learn the properties of materials,—sand, clay, wax, and that most fascinating one of all, plaster of Paris. Let them compare and note all differences,—the effects of too little water, too much, etc. If anything could be more delightful than signal failures with that treacherous plaster of Paris, it is disfiguring dresses and ruining valuable crucibles with it. Three little girls of my acquaintance were early initiated into the mysteries of modelling and impression-taking (learning the value and use of oil and wax in this connection) in the office of one who combined the attributes of indulgent father and complacent guide. Oh, the joy of mixing that beautiful white plaster in a clear glass! The exquisite "cakes" that it made! The absorbing interest aroused while obtaining impressions of coins! All return to me in retrospect at this moment. That office was long since despoiled of the crucibles and paraphernalia of the scientific experimenter. He himself has passed to the spirit world. The three little girls are earnest women, all engaged to-day, scattered and far from their early home, in guiding children along the devious, instructive, and pleasant paths of the modern kindergarten.

ANNIE SWAYZE BECK.

TRUTH.

"Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lip the smile of truth."

—Longfellow.

Oh, that beautiful smile of truth! the most lovely, most natural, and also the most rare of all the expressions of character.

I believe we all mean to be truthful. Most of us think that we are so, and yet there is no one thing more common than lying,—not wicked or malicious lying, but the small white lying that is so useless and so mean.

How often do mothers who are perfectly honest, mothers who are trying hard to do their best, praying for wisdom to rear their little ones, tell downright falsehoods to their babies!

The box of candy is hidden, and baby told "there is no more candy," and to-morrow out comes the same box that the sharp little eyes never fail to recognize; the bitter medicine that mamma tastes first, and says is "good"; the expensive toy that is promised for "to-morrow,"—all these are common trifles occurring every day in most homes. Those who are most thoughtful find the temptation coming again and again to thus smooth over the rough places in the nursery day; but, surely, it is not right. Better the five minutes' cry brought on by a strong, true word than smiles won by a deception that in the end does not deceive, but plants seeds of untruth in the heart of the child. Indeed, we cannot be too truthful with our babies. If the promise goes forth that in case of disobedience punishment will follow, it is a wrong not to inflict that punishment in case of disobedience.

Let us, then, be careful how we say, "I will punish you." And the same can be said of promised rewards. In the eyes of a little child the mother is the ideal being,—the ruler of the baby's world. Let us watch that our own hands do not shatter these beautiful, helpful, strengthening ideals in the hearts of our children.

EDITH WILLIS LINN.

Truth is not only a good thing, it is the very best; for without truth there can be no love.—*La Motte Fouqué.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. Henry R. Hallett, 310 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all books offered in this department are given, and the postage paid.*

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Hallett, asking, "*Shall I send such a book to such a person?*" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Hallett, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

A four-pound package is the most that can be sent by *mail*. The postage on four pounds of *magazines* is 16 cts., on four pounds of *books* 32 cts.

Postage on magazines and all periodicals (weighing less than four pounds), 1 cent for four ounces; on bound books, 1 cent for two ounces. *Paper* books are now sent by mail at the same rate as magazines, *when issued periodically*.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

I offer "The Philosophy of Wealth," by John B. Clark, A.M. This is a work on Economic Science, solid, instructive reading for a thinker. "Faggots for the Fireside,"

by Lucretia P. Hale,—a collection of one hundred games for young folks at home or parties. Address John W. Lang, Bowdoinham, Me.

I have the *Century* for 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, some numbers for 1885 and 1890, and *Scribner* for nine months, part of 1891 and 1892. Address Miss Von Arnim, Prescott Street, Longwood, Mass.

An offer has been made of a few copies of the "Homeward Path," a book of religious advice to young people. Address Mrs. H. R. Hallett, 310 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass.

I will send to any one who desires them several complete volumes of the *Christian Union* (now the *Outlook*) and one complete volume of the *Harvard Lampoon*. Address Miss Harriet E. Johnson, Weymouth, Mass.

(It is best to mention which years you offer.)

Mrs. L. H. Goodwin, Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia, offers "He fell in Love with his Wife," Roe; *Vick's Floral Magazine* for 1893; "Widow Bedott Papers"; and odd numbers of *Harper's Magazine*, *Scribner's*, and *North American Review*. Cannot pay postage.

Mrs. H. R. Hallett, 310 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass., offers the following books: "Progress of Discovery"; "Letters on Astronomy," Olmstead; Tiliman's "Principles of Chemistry"; "Elementary Arithmetic," Perkins; "Gradual Reader," Tower; "Elementary Treatise on Book-keeping," Crittenden; "A Practical System of Book-keeping," Mayhew; Swan's "District School Reader."

REQUESTS.

I would like so much to get "The Prince of India," by General Lew Wallace. Indeed, would be glad to have any one of his books, or any of Mrs. Lew Wallace's books. Mrs. D. B. Peach, Franklin, Tennessee.

May I ask some of the friends of the unfortunate, who kindly offer books through the dear little *Cheerful Letter*, to send me "From More Isles," Fothergill; "The Little Minister"; and "Paul and Virginia." Mrs. M. L. Williams, Godwin, North Carolina.

Miss Lou David will be pleased if you or any of your friends can send her the following books: "Independent Fourth Reader," "Independent Geography," first part; and first steps in "Language Lessons." Indeed, almost any kind of school-books for beginners will be very thankfully received. Address Mrs. J. J. Hardin, Huntley, Nebraska.

I would like "Dred, a Tale of the Dismal Swamp," by H. B. Stowe. William H. Thrasher, Jenison, Ottawa County, Michigan.

Miss H. A. P. Roth, Box 137, Hinsdale, Berkshire County, Mass., has been ill for a long time, and obliged to give up her position in a school. She would like Blair's "Rhetoric" and Kames's "Elements of Criticism." "Almost every day I need 'Familiar Allusions,' 'Noted Names of Fiction' (or something equivalent), a 'Geographical Gazetteer,' and a 'Biographical Dictionary' (Lippincott's or equivalent).

"In justice to my pupils, I ought to have another text-book. I would rather have A. S. Hill's 'Rhetoric,' but shall be very thankful for any except Hart's, Bain's, and Kellogg's. I could use to daily advantage Green's 'The Making of England,' Dickens's 'Child's History of England,' Tuckerman's 'Thoughts on the Poets,' Hawthorne's 'Scarlet Letter,' 'Outre-Mer,' Longfellow, Hawthorne's 'Twice Told Tales.' "

In *The Cheerful Letter* for May I notice among the books you offer "Hymns of the Ages," second series. I have the first series, and have found so much comfort in it—having been a great invalid a long time—that I am hoping to find still more in that, and then pass it on to some one else. Please direct to Miss M. A. Dikeman, Barnes, Washington County, Kansas, care of A. Ballard.

Mrs. Kate Bliss, Cambria, Hillsdale County, Michigan, would be very glad of reading, as she is greatly afflicted.

I have received a number of different magazines and four novels for my library, many thanks to the givers; but I am sorry to say that I am not able to pay for the sending of them. And those not able to pay for sending, please do not send, as I am a woman of very small means. I would be very pleased to receive the *Ladies' Home*

Journal this year, the *Baptist Flag*, and some good novels. I also would be very thankful to any one if they would send me a Reference Bible and a Concordance. Yours truly, Mrs. Lowe, Huntley, Nebraska, Box 6.

I feel anxious to get a copy of John Keble's "Christian Year." If any one would send, after reading, the *Pacific Unitarian* and this year's *Ladies' Home Journal*, I should feel grateful. Mrs. M. E. Oades, Olympia, Washington.

If you can, I would like for you to send the *Youth's Companion* to my youngest boy, Otis, as he likes it very much. I would like a good dialogue or pieces to speak in entertainment or school, and I will be very thankful for anything of the kind. With many thanks, Mrs. Adelia Towle, Olympia, Washington.

Mrs. Annie G. Brown, Pleasant River, Queens County, Nova Scotia, would like "Hitherto," "Faith Gartney's Girlhood," "A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life," and "Scottish Chiefs." It is suggested that any one sending should mark the parcel "second hand," otherwise it may be detained for duty.

Will some one who has a copy of "Daniel Deronda" to give away kindly notify Mrs. H. R. Hallett, 310 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass.?

Mrs. Susie Chapman, Washington, Louisiana, is a young mother with three children. She would like small books and cards, also *Every Other Sunday* as it comes out.

Mrs. Mary Elswich, Olympia, Washington, would like "The Little Minister," "Lamplighter," "Stepping Heavenward," or magazines.

Mrs. Martha Hartman, Olympia, Washington, would like the *Youth's Companion* for her children.

Mrs. Minnie Perkins, Olympia, Washington, has a boy nine years old for whom she wants some reading matter very much.

Mrs. M. Burchett, Box 173, Olympia, Washington, would like some reading for her daughter, seventeen years old, who is ill. Also there are some boys in her family.

I write you in behalf of the Star Lake Division, No. 15, Sons of Temperance. We are a small body, located at Star Lake, three miles from the railroad, and about the same from Puget Sound. Some of our members are very eager for reading matter of a good kind, but cannot afford to buy it. So we have started a library on a small scale. Those taking magazines and papers take them to the Division; and the members that have not seen them take them home for one week, then bring them back for others. I have been looking over the Book and Magazine Club in *The Cheerful Letter*, and think, perhaps, some one would take pleasure in sending something to our Division. Any of the leading magazines of the day, works on science, temperance, literature, etc., would be very acceptable. Yours truly, E. W. Reed, Grand Conductor, Star Lake, Washington.

Mrs. A. M. Bumpus, Middleboro, Mass., would like reading matter for herself and a girl of fifteen and a boy of twelve. She would like "Stepping Heavenward," "Ivanhoe," or the lives of any Christian leaders. She asks also for a Bible with raised type for an old lady who is blind and very poor.

Mrs. E. M. Backus, High Point, Guilford County, North Carolina, asks if some one can lend her a good Bible Commentary.

Miss Mabel A. Woolsey extends grateful thanks to each and all who have kindly remembered her with books, letters, silk pieces, etc., and begs to say that she will answer *all* letters just as fast as she has stamps, but, being *very* poor and getting almost *no* work to do, has no money to buy stamps, so can only write as friends send her a stamp or so. "After July 1 address me at Burton, Geauga County, Ohio, instead of Orwell, Ohio. Lovingly and gratefully, Mabel A. Woolsey."

I feel more thankful than words can tell to those who have so kindly contributed with stamps, books, and reading. I ask you, that have not received a line, to please excuse seeming neglect; for I never wished more strongly for paper, postage, and envelopes to answer letters in my life. I would gladly answer if it was possible. Will the kind lady who sent me the stamp to send this letter accept many thanks.

I realize now that I will never be able to repay my benefactors; but I rejoice to know that their reward will far exceed what earth can give. Will you all accept my heartfelt thanks, and remember us in your prayers? I will gladly give any one a copy of "Stepping Heavenward" if postage is furnished. I only have one copy. With my prayers and grateful thanks, I. H. N., (Miss) Margaret Hamil, Floy, Alabama.

(If those who wish for "Stepping Heavenward" will write to Mrs. Hallett, one name will be chosen and sent to Miss Hamil, and postage paid. The others will have their request printed in the Book Club.)

Mrs. James A. Tyner, 916 North Ninth Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, asks for a book called "The Song of Life," by Margaret W. Morley.

Mrs. T. C. Edwards, Bloomfield, Sonoma County, California, asks for "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and the drama of same name.

Mrs. B. R. Vannoy, Bethel, Texas, returns grateful thanks to all who have so kindly sent her reading, nice letters, cards, etc. She says: "I have written to each personally where I could find the name and address. I have enjoyed all so much. With loving thanks and gratitude."

Mrs. L. H. Goodwin, Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia, asks for reading matter suitable for young girls,—magazines, papers, or good novels or moral tales, such as "Vicar of Wakefield," John Halifax," "Pendennis," The Virginians," "Romola," or anything good. Has two daughters, sixteen and fourteen years old, and a son twelve. Would also like books or papers for the boy.

Dear Cheerful Letter,—Kind friends have sent me two copies of *The Cheerful Letter* for May, and, in looking through its columns, I find so many books offered which I should like so much to have; but owing to my being so far away, I suppose, I am always too late in asking for them, so have received but little reading through this source. I once sent a request through its columns for some books also, but never received any of them. My poor mother is now a shut-in, almost helpless from paralysis, so that I cannot leave her now at all; and, being kept so closely at home, I feel

the want more than ever of the companionship of good reading.

Now, kind friends, will you please send me any good books of travel, or any describing noted places or countries, any of Mrs. Stowe's books *except* "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "The Pearl of Orr's Island," or "The Minister's Wooing," any of Miss Jewett's or Mrs. Thaxter's (particularly "Among the Isles of Shoals" or "An Island Garden"), any of Miss Alcott's *except* "An Old-fashioned Girl," any of Dickens's *except* "David Copperfield," "Old Curiosity Shop," and "Christmas Stories,"—in fact, almost *anything* that is good.

I have made my list long, so that perhaps I may in this way receive at least one or two of the whole number. Let me ask also if any one will kindly send choice poems and short selections for scrap-books, as I wish to prepare a number for shut-ins at Christmas.

Wishing all the *Cheerful Letter* workers and every one else a pleasant summer, I remain a sincere friend to the cause. Mary H. Pittenger, Art, Clay County, Indiana. P. S.—Will some of the ladies who spend the summer at the seashore write me, describing the places at which they stay, and, if possible, send a little memento "of the sea?" M. H. P.

TO THE "SHUT-IN."

My dear Friends,—Would you enjoy with me, I wonder, an occasional morning in our interesting old Boston; for, though Boston is only my home by adoption,—and this, too, within a dozen years,—I have come to share, with those born here, a certain enthusiasm and pride of possession, and to you who may not visit us I shall tell with delight of all which I find here to interest and instruct.

You know the *real* of us—human beings, not only Boston beings—is *mind*. So, despite your physical limitations, you can mentally walk with me through our entertaining streets, visit our public buildings, the Art Museum, Art Club, and picture galleries, stroll through our Public Garden, and into our churches, and, I hope, be refreshed. At least we shall have together a genuine good time; and, better than all, we shall make friends with each other. Isn't it

Emerson who says, "A new friend is a great event to me, and hinders me from sleep"? and in that same essay do you remember, too, that he says, "Like friendship, immortality is too good to be true: it is for aid and comfort through all the passages of life"? So, through the medium of *The Cheerful Letter*, may not this ideal friendship grow to be ours,—“an exchange of gifts, of useful loans”? You will receive from me. I shall receive from you. But we will not do our sight-seeing in any conventional way,—after the fashion of the guide-books,—but according to our mood. Some days, perhaps, we will not sight-see at all. We will sit together under the glorious old trees of our Common, about which you have doubtless read much, and watch the busy, passing life around us, and talk of its meaning. Sometimes we will even have a stay-at-home day; for my home is in one of Boston's suburbs, and not indeed without charm.

Come with me to the St. Botolph Club (I feel hungry for pictures), where some of Hunt's choicest works are now on exhibition; and we ought to make the most of our opportunity. A word about this Saint Botolph, whose name the club bears; for I am assuming that you will be glad to know that he was the patron saint of sailors and, hence, of Boston in Old England, whose child we are. The proprietors of this club open one of their rooms to a limited public, kindly issuing tickets of admission, without price, to the various collections of pictures which during the winter season they are able to secure. This is a loan collection, brought here from private residences in Boston, and really precious, including Hunt's earliest and best works.

Born in Brattleboro, Vermont, in 1824, and coming to his death at the Isles of Shoals, one of his favorite summer resorts, no artist of our time ever had a more devoted following. He painted out of his heart, and he taught out of his heart. And the personal tie between master and pupil was of unsurpassed tenderness. This I have been repeatedly told by those fortunate enough to have studied with him; and one realizes this soulful quality in all of his pictures, they are so full of feeling, so perfectly natural, with no straining for effect. Directly opposite the door of the

room, my eye fell on his well-known "Marguerite." I had long owned and enjoyed an inexpensive lithograph of this figure; but here before me was the lovely girl, with all the color of Hunt's delicate touch, her dark hair loosely coiled at the back, her white gown charmingly concealing and revealing her graceful form. And there she stands, in that field of yellow grain, dotted with here and there a bright flower, all absorbed with the little wild daisy, which she holds in her hand, talking to each petal with timid voice, as one by one she breaks them off, and drops them on the ground. We've all done this, have we not? but we didn't all look like this "Marguerite." Close by her hangs "The Bugler,"—no repose in him,—such eager, joyous, manly vigor, as, mounted on his spirited horse, he dashes along, his bugle at his mouth, his head just turned for a last look and a last note to all he leaves behind.

Near by hangs an attractive Roman girl. On her head that peculiar head-dress of folded white cloth always worn by the Italian peasant women, and the long apron with gay-colored bands. The "Hurdy-gurdy Boy" and the little "Drummer" are fascinating pictures; but sweeter than either, to me, is the "Violet Girl." She sits in her little straight-back chair, at her door, a red kerchief tied over her head, giving her such a quaint look; in her lap a tray of violets, done up in bunches, one of which she holds out in her hand to the passer-by, and a most pleading expression on her face for the needed penny. This collection is largely made up of figure-pieces, though there is here and there a charming landscape. I do not know whether Hunt preferred to paint the former, but his portraits have all been wonderfully successful. His boldest work—his masterpiece, indeed—is at Albany, on the walls of the capitol; and it is to be deeply lamented that the frescos are almost wholly destroyed by the dampness, which, owing to the poor construction of that building, has penetrated the walls. Perhaps you have seen those grand, prancing horses, modelled in clay, known everywhere as "Hunt's horses," taken from one of these decorations at the capitol. Still another of these frescos is the figure of a beautiful woman,—“Anahita” by name,—seated on clouds gorgeous in coloring; and I think it

must be of this that the trite amusing incident was related to me the other day. Hunt, it seems, when at work on these frescos, had given peremptory orders that no one should be admitted to the dome. One of the workmen employed in building felt a great curiosity to see what was going on, and thought he could climb, unobserved, by the scaffolding, and take a look. So silently he made his way, till a finished lunette met his sight, when with startled surprise he exclaimed, "Golly, I thought it was a woman!" For this spontaneous tribute Hunt forgave the intruder.

But I fear you will weary with too much sight-seeing for one day. Yours cordially,
EDEN.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

It has come to my knowledge that a parcel was sent to an applicant on which \$3.20 was charged. As the lady had only \$5.00 with which to pay the charges and get her boy a pair of shoes, the boy went without the shoes. Can you not have a peremptory notice put in that boxes *must* be prepaid? Mrs. Miner has also received some which were not prepaid, so we know that it is not an uncommon occurrence.

[The editor thinks that probably no one sends a box without prepaying the express or freight. The most common mistake is that of collecting payment at both ends. We will ask—not peremptorily, but yet earnestly—that our kind friends save themselves and those they wish to help much annoyance by sending *always* a postal as forerunner of the box or parcel, stating that all charges have been paid.]

To Miss Mabel A. Woolsey, Miss Mary H. Pittenger, Mrs. A. M. Bumpus, and others. Your letters should have been addressed to Mrs. Hallett, the secretary of the Book Club, not to the editor.

By attention to this rule you will be more likely to receive the book for which you ask. If, for instance, you ask for "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and send your request to Mrs. Hallett, some one else may have just offered "Uncle Tom's Cabin." In that case, Mrs. Hallett sends word to the giver that she may send the book directly to you, not waiting to print the request. By sending to the

editor, your request is either sent back to Mrs. Hallett or else kept on hand for the next number of the paper. Correspondents gain nothing and lose a little time by sending requests to the editor. N.B.—Of course, this does not apply, when the editor *offers* a book personally. In *all* such cases, you write *directly* to the person who offers.

To Mrs. J. S. Quisenbury.—Your letter with requests might have been inserted, had it been written on *one* side only of the paper. There was not time to copy it.

FROM A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

My eldest son is sixteen: he is one of the best boys that ever lived. His great desire is to get an education, he is so fond of books and reading. The next, my daughter L., aged fourteen, but no larger than a child of eight years. She weighs only thirty-five pounds: she can only do some light work, as she is not at all strong. She cannot walk and run like other children. She likes to sew, to piece quilts, and loves books. She is trying to get a little library, all of her own. She has three books, "Little Men," "Æsop's Fables," and "Swiss Family Robinson." They have been read many times. The next, B., twelve years. She is papa's right hand man. [The eldest son is away at work. Ed.] She drives the oxen, she harrowed the ground for the garden, hauls poles, posts, rails, logs, and everything with them. She has one of them so gentle that she can ride him anywhere. F., aged ten years, W., seven: they get all the wood for fireplace and stove. They will take the cross-cut saw, and saw up big logs, and split them. They help papa to clear up land, to plant the garden, to hoe, besides many other things. The children are always hard at work from morning till night. We get up a little after four o'clock; and sometimes it is eight o'clock at night before the children get through with their work and have a chance to eat their suppers and go to bed, and often so tired they can hardly wait to eat before going to bed. The next is H., four years old. He is a little round, fat boy. And last, not least in her own estimation, the baby, Alice Ruth, two years old. She talks everything, and trots round after the other children all day long. She won't stay in the house a moment.

I have asked for books once or twice, but they would always be gone before my letter was received. I live too far away to get books. I would be glad to get the one you speak of, or any other good books. We have planted a large garden; but it has been so cold and stormy nearly all the corn, beans, and squashes have rotted in the ground, and what did come up the frost bit, and what the frost did not kill the blue jays seemed determined to destroy. We have every disadvantage to work against. We shall not have nearly the garden we thought we would when we were planting it. We have taken so much pains in ploughing and harrowing it, and getting the ground just right, and planting the best seed we could get. We thought we should raise a fine big garden to live on next winter. . . . I get the *Ladies' World* and the *Hearth and Home*. The children get no papers or magazines of their own. The girls and I are piecing a quilt. I want to get all the bed covering ready for next winter, for we need it so badly.

[The address of this family will be sent to any one who desires it. Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Magnolia, Mass.]

Mrs. J. G. Quisenbury, Glade Spring, Virginia, asks earnestly for old magazines for her mission work among the mountain people, quite destitute of reading.

Mrs. May D. Jones, North Platte, Nebraska, would also be very glad to receive magazines, and good secular reading, for distribution among a farming population.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Please observe that during the months of June, July, August, and September our treasurer's *personal* address is Miss Louise Howe, Nahant, Mass. Subscriptions may always be sent to her at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

The editor's personal address during July, August, and September is Magnolia, Mass. But communications addressed to her in Jamaica Plain will reach her after a short delay.

Will our friends kindly notice that *requests for reading* and offers for the same

should not be addressed to the editor, but to the secretary of the Book Club, Mrs. Hallett.

We make the following suggestions to members of the Cheerful letter Exchange.

In sending a bound book through the mail, wrap it up carefully in several thicknesses of paper. Protect the corners, if possible. One thin piece of paper is not enough.

Keep your correspondents supplied with P.O. cards. By this we mean, not only send one card or envelope when you send a book or letter, but send a few extra cards, so that they may be able to write a request for a book which they see in *The Cheerful Letter*. Many of our shut-ins are too remote from a post-office to have the opportunity often to buy cards or stamps; and many lack even the very few cents that they need to provide the means of writing. A P.O. card at hand is a real convenience.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or Nahant, Mass.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. Henry R. Hallett, 310 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals may be sent to the treasurer as above. The subscription is fifty cents a year.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Hallett; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

Send also all notices of *changes of address* to Miss Langmaid. Please do not send these notices to the editor, as it causes delay in the correction.